The course: Halfway through the elementals of Latin grammar, syntax, and vocabulary; by the time you finish the second semester you'll be ready for upper-division work in original ancient authors. An inductive method emphasizing the reading of continuous prose. Plus memorization of paradigms and rules, Latin to English and English to Latin exercises. Since Latin is the basis of some 60-70% of English vocabulary, and since Latin grammar and syntax illuminate the structure of English, this will to some extent also be a course in English.


The pace and the grading: We will finish half the book, fifteen chapters this semester, going a little faster than a chapter a week, leaving time for quizzes, a midterm, a few slide shows of Roman civilization, and Roman orgies.

Every class each student will have his or her own few minutes of fame, which is to say of performance; which is to say, every day you'll be contributing to your final grade with your translations, parsing (more of this later), and prepared exercises. By the end of this first week, the routine should be clear to you Half of your grade will be based on the daily performance; the other half on approximately six quizzes, a midterm (TBA) and a final (Tuesday, December 14, 10:30-12:30). Makeups for the quizzes, midterm, and final only for serious, documented reasons: a copy of your CAT scan or receipt from King Stahlmann will do nicely.

Learning a language, especially a complex ancient language, is a cumulative process. If you miss a day's piece of the puzzle, you can't catch up somewhere down the road; you have to catch up immediately so you don't miss the next piece too. In other words, come to class prepared every day.

Latin isn't rocket science or calculus; time and determination usually win out. Nevertheless, some students have a harder time than others getting the hang of it. Be prepared to spend two hours or a little more preparing for each class. You'll probably have an easier time of it if you've been a voracious reader of challenging books and a regular user of the dictionary.